

Introduction

This inspection was carried out under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

The report of the inspection is produced for the Archbishop of Liverpool (Code of Canon Law 804 and 806) and for the governors of the school.

The inspectors are members of the Christian Education Department and their associates approved by the Archbishop of Liverpool for this purpose.

Information about the school

St Brigid's is an average sized Catholic Primary School situated in Stockbridge Village, Knowsley. The majority of learners serve the parish of St Albert's. There are 176 children on roll of whom 145 are baptised Catholic, 30 come from other Christian denominations, and 1 is from another faith or religious tradition. A small minority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is above average. A very high proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for school meals. There are 11 teachers of whom 11 teach Religious Education. Nine are Catholic. Four teachers have a suitable qualification in Religious Education and 2 are studying for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

Since 2009 the school became part of a hard federation with St Albert's Catholic Primary School. There is a joint governing body for both schools. Currently the headteacher of St Brigid's is also the executive headteacher of St Albert's.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

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Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school.

Inspection Judgements

**Overall effectiveness:
How effective the school is in providing Catholic Education**

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main Findings:-

The school is good overall in providing Catholic Education. There is a clear vision for Catholic Education which is embraced by the whole school community. Since the last inspection the school has securely maintained and built on previously good performance. Self evaluation is accurate. Outcomes for pupils are good. There is no significant difference in performance between groups of pupils. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are good. The leadership team is deeply motivated and consistently communicates its high expectations to staff in order to continue improvements. Staff are affirmed and supported. Teachers are provided with in-service to support their ongoing development. Action plans are in place showing realistic and challenging targets.

St Brigid's school is a comfortable and safe place to be. It is a haven where vibrant, colourful displays fill every corridor. Pupils, parents and staff are supportive of one another and all work towards good strong relationships. Pupils at St Brigid's show outstanding behaviour and a very caring attitude towards visitors. St Brigid's holds a number of awards, amongst the many are the 'International Schools Award', 'Active Mark', 'Eco Schools', 'Sport England'. The headteacher is a full and active member in St Albert's parish providing a true reflection in serving the community. The parish priest praises all staff in their dignity, knowing that they are committed to the complex and multiple needs of parents, carers and the surrounding community, *'the ethos is life giving'*.

Overall the school has good capacity for sustained improvement.

What the school needs to do to improve further

- Improvements to Religious Education by:
 - consistently monitoring planning, workbooks, teaching and learning to ensure differentiation, driver words, self assessment;
 - sharing good practise throughout the school.

- Improvements to formally assessing Religious Education by:
 - continuing moderation to build a portfolio of standardised work;
 - developing class and whole school tracking to matching planning to suit groups of children.

- Develop staff professionally by:
 - attending Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils

Pupils' achievements in Religious Education are good. Outcomes for pupils with additional or special needs are good. On entry to school many children have a limited knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Pupils' attainment in Religious Education is average. Pupils make broadly average progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities. Analysis of assessments undertaken provides evidence that pupils are attaining appropriate levels in the early stages of attainment targets for knowledge and understanding of religion. There is no difference in performance between pupils of different gender. Pupils are becoming more literate. Their knowledge, understanding and skills are developing appropriate to their age and capacity. They are developing some skills that enable them to think spiritually, ethically and theologically and are becoming more aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life. Pupils are encouraged to work independently and collaboratively. Pupils' enjoyment of their learning is good as shown by their interest, enthusiasm and behaviour. Pupils understand what is asked of them and are keen to produce good work. In some lessons observed pupils are responsible for their learning and undertake a good sustained pace, aiming to achieve their learning objective. They show respect for others decisions and opinions. Pupils enjoy linking their own experiences to their religious education. Pupils learning and progress will improve further through raising expectations and developing differentiated tasks that link to their abilities. Opportunities to extend and challenge pupils should improve with the variety of activities and links to attainment levels given in the new religious education programme, *Come and See*.

Pupils are actively involved in developing and evaluating the Catholic character of the school by living out their mission. They show a good understanding of their rights and responsibilities, for example, by regularly involving the school council in the development of the mission statement. Pupils take an increasing responsibility for themselves and their actions. The school council take pride in recognising the contribution of others in main assemblies, distributing certificates and awards. They set an example through praise and acknowledgement of others. Pupils' have a good sense of belonging to the school community and value and respect others. They are encouraged to take on roles of responsibility in the school and in the wider community, for example, holding fundraising events for CAFOD and the Good Shepherd. They take part in joint masses with their partner school St Albert's and provide carol services for the community. Pupils are considerate and caring of others both in school and the wider community. Some pupils have been awarded a Citizenship Award for their commitment to their local community. Pupils benefit from participation in away days and residential in 'Winmarleigh', Lancashire and 'Colomendy', North Wales. They are encouraged to attend to build close relationships and celebrate their experiences. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. A '*Gender and Conflict*' topic that explores issues on bullying allows pupils to apply a good sense of right and wrong and apply this in their personal relationships. St Brigid's pupils show a readiness to embrace and celebrate their lived experiences and expressed, '*We love the school and want to stay forever*'.

Pupils are good in responding to and participating in the schools Collective Worship. They are given some opportunities to prepare and lead worship.

They act with reverence and are keen to participate in a variety of gatherings. They sing joyfully, reflect in silence and join in community prayers appropriately and with confidence. No-one is expected to act in a manner contrary to their beliefs and all show mutual respect. Pupils' knowledge of prayer and liturgy is increasing. They are becoming familiar with a variety of prayer styles. They appreciate and are open to the Word of God in the scriptures.

How good outcomes are for individuals and groups of pupils	
How well pupils achieve in Religious Education	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pupils' standards of attainment in Religious Education 	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the quality of pupils' learning and their progress in Religious Education 	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic Life of the school	2
How well pupils respond to and participate in the school's Collective Worship	2

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education

The quality of teaching is effective in ensuring that pupils are interested and engaged and make good progress. Teachers take into account pupils' prior learning and give a variety of tasks when planning. Effective daily evaluations enable teachers to consolidate and build on knowledge and understanding. Consistent monitoring of planning would ensure that tasks show further differentiation through use of the driver words. Some good use is made of time and resources. In outstanding lessons observed excellent use of questioning ensured detailed responses from the pupils. Information technology observed maximised learning and throughout the school supported the learning objectives. Pupils are given time to reflect on Scripture and develop responses. In a lesson observed, action images such as footballers, engaged pupils to deepen understanding of Scripture. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to work independently and collaboratively. Further provision is needed to extend and accelerate learning, in particular for more able pupils. The new Religious Education programme, '*Come and See*' will ensure a more rigorous approach to tasks and content in workbooks. Teachers and others use a variety of strategies to sustain and motivate pupils. Positive suggestions and praise encouraged older pupils to maintain concentration and work in a cooperative manner. Pupils are informed of their progress and how to improve orally. They are given opportunities to discuss their work and progress. Mature discussions between a teacher and oldest pupils deepened understanding. There are strong bonds between pupils, teachers and assistants. Teachers throughout the school have a calm and gentle approach towards pupils. Teaching assistants continuously assess and monitor pupils at work and support pupils in listening to others and involvement in lessons. Achievement and effort are celebrated. Pupils are affirmed orally to know how well they are doing.

The assessment of pupils work in Religious Education is satisfactory. There is some evidence of positive and encouraging marking. Teachers now need to challenge pupils learning through marking appropriate to their age and stage of development, allowing pupils to evaluate their own work. Formal assessment tasks are undertaken in line with Archdiocesan guidance. The school has formal assessment strategies in place which provides a broadly accurate picture of the achievement of all the pupils. Formal assessment levelling is secure within the

lower attainment levels. Through planned monitoring and continued moderation of assessment, higher levels of attainment can be secured. Teachers are in the beginning stages of using levels attained through class tracking and are able to identify how well pupils are achieving. The school now needs to develop tracking to gain a clear picture of levels of attainment across the whole school that will inform the leadership team, governors and parents.

The curriculum is satisfactory in meeting pupils' needs. The school using the Here I Am programme recommended by the Archdiocese meets the requirements of the Curriculum Directory for Religious Education. A whole school approach is used and appropriate levels of the programme are being followed in different classes. This ensures complete Religious Education entitlement for each child and meets National and Archdiocesan requirements.

Of the total curriculum time 10% is allocated to Religious Education. This fulfils the requirements of the Bishops of England and Wales. Planning ensures that the Religious Education programme is covered. There are some good and adequate strategies planned to develop pupils learning. Continuous monitoring of the Religious Education curriculum and assessment would ensure that the needs of groups of individuals are customised. Comprehensive curriculum outlines are provided for parents who are consulted on different issues depending on the topic being covered. The school implements new curriculum developments as appropriate. St Brigid's seeks to develop Religious Education through a cross curricular approach. The school uses the International Primary Curriculum that enriches children in their global awareness. Enrichment activities have a positive impact on the curriculum such as the 'Children's University' and there are a variety of after school clubs provided. Good opportunities are provided for pupils' spiritual and moral development, for example pupils participated in a local CAFOD social justice sporting event.

The Collective Worship provided is good in reflecting the Catholic character of the school. Collective Worship plays a key part in meeting the spiritual needs of the pupils. Opportunities are provided to enable full, active and conscious participation of the whole school community. Children are enabled to pray formally and informally. The school provides opportunities for staff to develop the skills in planning and leading Collective Worship. Staff have undertaken Collective Worship in-service led by the Archdiocese. The school can now develop skills in Collective Worship through continuous monitoring and sharing good practise amongst key stages. The subject leader is keen to develop Collective Worship and has action plans in place. The teachers are beginning to provide the necessary resources and opportunities to help children to develop the skills necessary to plan, lead and participate in Collective Worship. Opportunities are provided for parents, carers the local and wider Faith communities to participate in a variety of celebrations of the 'Here I Am' programme and the Church's liturgical year.

How effective the provision is for Catholic Education	
The quality of teaching and purposeful learning in Religious Education	2
The effectiveness of assessment in Religious Education	3
The extent to which the Religious Education curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
The quality of Collective Worship provided by the school	2

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the schools

Leaders and managers are good in promoting and developing the Catholic life of the school and show a good understanding of and commitment to the Mission of the Church. This is reflected in the Schools own Mission Statement. *'To spread God's love and follow in His footsteps'*. Action plans are in place to review the schools' Mission Statement as part of the federated approach for both St Brigid's and St Albert's. All who form part of the school community including parents, Priests, governors and children were involved in the development and review of the Mission Statement. Its aims and practical objectives direct and guide every aspect of school life and are a useful tool by which the school evaluates its effectiveness. Opportunities are provided for the staff and pupils to play an active part in Catholic life and Mission of the school e.g. good opportunities are provided for pupils to take on areas of responsibility through, for example, the school council and they act as front desk monitors. Pupils and parents are loyal and have a sense of belonging as views are valued and acted upon. *'Pupil Voice'* ensures feedback from a range of pupils about the life of the school, providing good monitoring and self evaluation. The Self Evaluation Document provides evidence of the schools range of monitoring activities and self challenge. Their analysis provides a basis to celebrate the schools strengths and outlining areas for development. The school provides good induction and in-service training to enable staff to further understand the Church's Mission in Education and play their unique part in it e.g. Topic days provided by the Archdiocese are well attended. Staff meetings show appropriate time is given to Religious Education. A small number of teachers have a suitable Religious Education qualification. A range of opportunities for Spiritual and Moral development are provided for staff and pupils such as daily acts of worship and combined Mass celebrations with St Albert's and the surrounding communities. These enable the community of both schools to set an example of their mission.

Leaders and managers are satisfactory in the way they use monitoring data to evaluate the schools performance, celebrate, and plan future improvements. Leaders and managers monitor the progress of pupils and know that further development of this is needed in Religious Education. They know the schools major strengths and areas for development. Their strengths lie in the views of parents and pupils, prioritising areas for improvement and identification of appropriate targets. Leaders and managers now know that consistent monitoring of planning and teaching and learning will have a greater impact for the school and its pupils. The subject leader has been in role for a number of years, she introduces new initiatives when appropriate. The subject leader supports staff and works well with the parish. There are action plans in place for continuing development and these are fed to the headteacher. Sharing good practise across the school would aid the development of the subject leader's role. There is some good documentation in place that guides and directs all staff in the delivery of the subject. This is updated as necessary.

Governors are good in fulfilling their responsibilities. The Chair of Governors is a familiar face around school and supports hymn practice on a regular basis. There are good relationships with staff members and parents. The governors are fully supportive and help to shape the direction of the school. Governors are influential in their commitment to the Catholic life of the school and provide very

strong links to the parish life. They have a strong duty towards community cohesion and welcome opportunities that will have a positive impact on the community. The head teacher keeps the governors fully informed of strengths and areas for development within the school. Governors set priorities for the school and there is a healthy Religious Education budget in line with other subjects. Governors would benefit from awareness and training of initiatives in place for pupils' assessment and how teaching and learning through the new Religious Education Programme will influence and raise expectations. As the school continues to develop its formal tracking of pupils' levels of attainment, feedback to the governors on the school's performance will be more detailed.

Parents are consulted regularly and involved in a variety of ways in the life of the school. Attractive and thorough newsletters provided are an example of the value and relationships held with parents. Parents speak highly of the headteacher, '*she is a visual head, she knows all our names*'. There is a parent mentor who arranges numerous courses for parents and children. Her commitment has led to successful uptake of numerous learning opportunities and changes in attitudes towards school personnel. Close engagement with parents have led to a greater understanding of the ethos of St Brigid's.

Leadership at all levels respects difference, values diversity and ensures equal opportunities for all. The inclusion of all is a central goal and a shared vision. Community cohesion at St Brigid's is outstanding. St Brigid's takes good advantage of their '*International Schools Award*' status to learn about and celebrate diversity. Prayer, worship and the liturgical life of the school reflects and respects all within the school and the surrounding community. There are positive relationships at every level within the school. Leaders and managers facilitate pupils' involvement in service to the local Faith and religious communities. Community events such as Christmas and Summer fairs, fun runs, family bingo allow the community to engage with the school. St Brigid's has supported the local council's ethnic minority service, '*Arriving and Belonging*'. The immediate neighbourhood and wider community are served greatly by the school. St Brigid's is part of the '*Purple Family*' where factors affecting the learning, lives and families in the locality are provided with support and solutions. Parish participation sporting events are twinned with special schools and are attended regularly. The school and parish work closely supporting the Handicapped Children's Pilgrimage Trust. The '*SPACE for Sports and Arts*' building, alongside school grounds provides extra capacity for breakfast clubs, sporting activities and teaching and learning opportunities. The building is a useful resource for many community events. Dialogue and collaboration is encouraged with people who hold different beliefs and values. Children have explored the beliefs and values of other faiths and religions. Visitors for the teaching of other faiths and religions are invited into school to support teaching, such as a member of the Jewish community. This helps to promote tolerance and respect for those who think differently. The use of the '*Here I am*' programme promotes community cohesion. Creating links throughout the curriculum to pupils' lives through the use of '*social and emotional aspects of learning*' impacts on messages home to parents. The review of the Mission Statement will be an opportunity to highlight the outstanding examples of the way in which St Brigid's is serving the community.

How effective leaders and managers are in developing the Catholic Life of the School	
How well leaders and managers promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic Life of the school and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	2
How well leaders and managers monitor and evaluate the provision for Religious Education and plan and implement improvement to outcomes for pupils	3
The extent to which the governing body provides effective challenge and support for the Catholic dimension of the school so areas needing development are addressed decisively and responsibilities met	2
How effectively leaders and managers promote community cohesion	1